

further explanations for their contemporary distribution. Now, with Krug's results at one's finger tips, further research can be spear-headed grounded in his rich findings.

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Paul Foulkes and Gerard Docherty (eds.), *Urban voices: accent studies in the British Isles*. London: Arnold, 1999. Pp. 313. Paperback £17.99, ISBN 0 340 70608 2. Published in the USA by Oxford University Press, New York.

Reviewed by Patrick Honeybone, Edge Hill College of Higher Education

One of the sadly few aspects of linguistics that the media have an interest in (in the UK, at least) is the study of accents. While they might not know or care what the difference is between 'accent' and 'dialect', journalists know that their audiences have a real interest in many of the issues connected with the social and regional varieties of English. As editors Foulkes and Docherty (henceforth F&D) mention in

their introductory initial chapter to this welcome and important book,¹ many articles have recently appeared in the British press on the putative role that television soap operas play in causing the spread of certain accent features, such as glottalling ($t \rightarrow ?$), fricative fronting ($\theta, \delta \rightarrow f, v$), and high rising intonation. As F&D comment further, there has been little academic research on this question, and, despite the strongly sociolinguistic flavour of several of the chapters in *Urban voices* (henceforth *UV*), there is little comment on that issue here.

A substantial amount of research *has* been carried out on the accents of English spoken in the British Isles, however. What sets *UV* apart from these previous publications is neatly summarized in F&D's two immediate aims in producing the volume: '(i) to provide a collection of recent research based on empirical studies on accent variation; and (ii) to collect together descriptive data yielded by such studies to stand as a reference resource' (p. 1). Much of the recent work on accents of English is scattered in journal articles and PhD theses, and F&D are to be congratulated on bringing this work together in one volume. There are, naturally, flaws in the book, but many of these are unavoidable in an edited volume. There is some considerable variation in the individual chapters in terms of aims and achievements. The disparity in the chapters' aims, at least, is partly intentional, however, and is of potentially paradigm-creating importance.

As well as initial and final matter, the volume consists of fifteen chapters. In the first of these, 'Urban voices – overview', *UV*'s editors set the subsequent chapters in context and make explicit the links between them. They also do much more than this. F&D run through a range of the key issues that are connected with any linguistic research on pronunciation and discuss the main important topics in the study of the development of accents and the relationships that can exist between accents of one language, all in a remarkably short space. As F&D explain, previous and ongoing work on accents in the UK and the Republic of Ireland, as elsewhere, has been carried out in several distinct frameworks. Researchers who would characterize themselves as phonologists, phoneticians, dialectologists, and sociolinguists² have all conducted work on these varieties, often to investigate a particular theoretical debate in their own discipline. Work in all these fields is featured in the chapters of *UV*. All too often, researchers from different disciplines do not speak to each other, although it is clear that such communication could be advantageous for all. F&D propose that work from all these disciplines, when it takes accents of a particular language as its empirical base, should also be seen as part of a broad discipline which they name 'accent studies'. It is profoundly to be hoped that this compromise discipline takes off, so that, while phonologists, for example, will still speak to phonologists about the debates which are relevant in their discipline, and sociolinguists will speak to sociolinguists, each might also speak to the other, and

¹ Thanks are due to Paul Foulkes for bringing Kallen (2001) to my attention, for other helpful comments and for telling me to be as brutal as I needed to be in this review. Luckily, there's little to be brutal about.

² We might also add historical phonologists to the list.

the description of ‘accent variation can be seen as a pursuit in its own right, rather than being an issue towards the periphery of numerous separate academic traditions’ (p. 6).³ Such description is indeed a valid aim in its own right, and will, needless to say, connect with the media interest in the topic mentioned at the beginning of this review.

The dual aims of *UV* shape most of the remaining fourteen chapters of the volume. Apart from two, each of these presents (i) ‘descriptive material’ for one or more accents of English which involves, in varying degrees of detail, phonetic and phonological description of the accents, and (ii) a discussion of an issue of theoretical or methodological importance for (at least) one of the disciplines which F&D include in accent studies, using accent material from the chapter as its empirical base. The details of these chapters are:

- Chapter 2: ‘Patterns of variation and change in three Newcastle vowels: is this dialect levelling?’ by Dominic Watt & Lesley Milroy
- Chapter 3: ‘Derby and Newcastle: instrumental phonetics and variationist studies’ by Gerard J. Docherty & Paul Foulkes
- Chapter 4: ‘Sheffield dialect in the 1990s: revisiting the concept of NORMs’ by Jana Stoddart, Clive Upton & J. D. A. Widdowson
- Chapter 5: ‘West Wirral: norms, self-reports and usage’ by Mark Newbrook
- Chapter 6: ‘Sandwell, West Midlands: ambiguous perspectives on gender patterns and models of change’ by Anne Grethe Mathisen
- Chapter 7: ‘Norwich: endogenous and exogenous linguistic change’ by Peter Trudgill
- Chapter 8: ‘Dialect levelling: change and continuity in Milton Keynes, Reading and Hull’ by Ann Williams & Paul Kerswill
- Chapter 9: ‘South East London English: discrete versus continuous modelling of consonantal reduction’ by Laura Tollfree
- Chapter 10: ‘Cardiff: a real-time study of glottalization’ by Inger M. Mees & Beverley Collins
- Chapter 11: ‘Glasgow: accent and voice quality’ by Jane Stuart-Smith
- Chapter 12: ‘Edinburgh: descriptive material’ by Deborah Chirrey
- Chapter 13: ‘Standard English in Edinburgh and Glasgow: the Scottish Vowel Length Rule revealed’ by James M. Scobbie, Nigel Hewlett & Alice E. Turk
- Chapter 14: ‘(London)Derry: between Ulster and local speech – class, ethnicity and language change’ by Kevin McCafferty
- Chapter 15: ‘Dublin English: current changes and their motivation’ by Raymond Hickey

³ A perhaps discouraging sign in this regard is the review of *UV* in Kallen (2001), where the notion of accent studies, as presented in the volume, is criticized for its lack of coherence. This is particularly discouraging as the key criticism of *UV* in that review seems to be that not all of the chapters are purely examples of sociolinguistics.

The accents discussed in the individual chapters are largely clear from the chapter titles, apart from the fact that Docherty & Foulkes's chapter 3 only presents descriptive material for Derby (because Watt & Milroy's chapter 2 presents material for Newcastle). The other slight anomalies are that Chirrey's chapter 12 only presents descriptive material, which is compensated for by Scobbie, Hewlett & Turk's chapter 13, which presents no descriptive material, but discusses important phonetic and phonological issues connected with data from chapters 11 and 12.

Several things will be clear from the list of contents: (i) F&D have succeeded in bringing together many of the best-known and respected figures in their fields to describe accents that they have worked on for years, and (ii) the accents covered in *UV* represent a fairly diverse and broadly based selection from a good range of English regions and with an example or two from Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and the Republic of Ireland, but (iii) not all of the accents covered are strictly speaking urban – for example, West Wirral, which the author describes as 'mixed rural/suburban' (p. 90), and (iv) the accents of many key urban areas in the British Isles are not discussed – for example, Manchester, Leeds, Aberdeen, Dundee, Belfast, Cork, any accent of south-west England and north Wales, and Liverpool (although this is touched on in chapter 5). It would be difficult for one book to cover all accents, even all urban accents, and several of these lacunae are due to the fact that little or no research has been done on the varieties in question. A second volume would certainly be welcome, to rectify some of these omissions.

The volume's dual aims have further implications. On the positive side, they open up the prospect that it will appeal to more than one audience; on the negative side, they mean that the book could run the danger of trying to do too much, while failing to achieve either aim in enough detail. Luckily, most of the chapters avoid the possible negative implications and succeed in fulfilling their positive promise. It is likely that the descriptive aspect of the book will be of most use in teaching, while the discursive, theoretical aspect will be of most interest to academic researchers. This double appeal is a clever trick to pull off in a single volume.⁴ However, while the constraints that are put on the space available by this requirement to do two things at once do, in fact, mean that sometimes both sides suffer and the reader is left with the wish that the description could have been more detailed and the theoretical discussion more in depth, the overall impression is that the volume is a success. *UV* has already established itself on the reading lists of academic courses dealing with the accents of English, as a web search for 'Urban Voices' and 'reading' shows, and some of the theoretical discussions have important and novel implications for the disciplines that they connect with.

The descriptive material varies from around four pages (e.g. McCafferty on

⁴ *UV* is described as a 'textbook' in the blurb on its back cover, but this seems mistaken. It certainly could (and probably should) be prescribed for courses on accent variation in British and Irish English, and several of the theoretical discussions could usefully be set as readings on courses in phonetics, sociolinguistics, or historical phonology for example, but *UV* is more than just a textbook. Several of the theoretical discussions are important contributions to debate in their disciplines.

(London)Derry and Hickey on Dublin) to eleven pages (Tollfree on South East London). All descriptions make use of the notion of ‘keywords’, introduced by Wells (1982), as a means to describe, discuss, and compare the types of vocalic contrasts and realizations that exist in accents of English without having to artificially choose the phonemes of one accent as a basis for comparison and to avoid the imputation of a pandialectal phonological system. Thus, for example, GOAT stands for a set of words which all feature the same vowel (or set of vowel variants): in Northern English varieties this is most often a long monophthong (Stoddart, Upton & Widdowson show this to be most commonly [ɔ:] in Sheffield, and Watt & Milroy describe [ɔ:] as the most common realization in Newcastle) and Southern English normally has a diphthong (Tollfree describes [ʌʊ] as a common variant in South East London). Chapters extend the core set of keywords to allow the description of the phonological contrasts and segmental realizations in the variety in question.

The ‘small capital’ notation is also extended to the discussion of consonantal phenomena, thus the various realizations of /t/ are discussed under the heading τ, and conventions such as STOPS and H-DROPPING are used. These are pragmatically useful conventions, but authors also use phonological conventions such as /t/ and sociolinguistic ones such as (t) (and even (τ)) in their discussion, to differing degrees.

The aim of description and the use of keywords invites comparison with Wells’s (1982) *Accents of English*, particularly volume 2, *The British Isles*. While sections of this book are probably the closest thing available to the descriptive portions of the *UV* chapters, the two books are quite different. The chapters of *UV* often provide detail not available in Wells (1982), but *UV* makes no claim at completeness of coverage and, as explained above, it contains substantial theoretical discussion of issues not addressed in Wells’s books. The detail provided in many of the chapters of *UV* also sets it apart from the few other descriptive works on British accents, such as Hughes & Trudgill (1996).

The theoretical plurality, the range of accents covered, and constraints of space make it impossible to engage here with all the material in the book, but some comments are in order.

In terms of the descriptive material, several chapters are very detailed, for example, that by Chirrey on Edinburgh English. However, the discussion of segmental phonetics and phonology is in general far more detailed than the discussion of suprasegmental matters. Not only is intonation only very briefly discussed, if at all,⁵ very little reference is made to syllabic or other prosodic structure. While this may be the result of a conscious decision to save space, it can lead to descriptive inadequacies; for example, Newbrook’s treatment of κ in Liverpool English as it is reflected in West Wirral English refers to ‘[a]ffricate/fricative/

⁵ Remarkably, Newbrook makes no mention of intonation at all, despite the fact that one of the main varieties that he deals with, Liverpool English, is well recognized as having distinctive intonational patterns which have been described in unusual detail in Knowles (1974). Mees & Collins’s chapter on Cardiff English is an exception to the pattern here, as it deals with intonation in some detail.

heavily aspirated Liverpool /k/ (more usually fricative [x])' (p. 97), ignoring the fact that these realizations are conditioned by syllabic, other prosodic, and melodic constraints (see, for example, Honeybone, 2001). The description of the vocalic variants found in the varieties discussed is often very detailed (especially in Williams & Kerswill's and Tollfree's chapters) but this does somewhat serve to intrigue the reader as to which factors precisely govern the variation. There is little doubt, however, that the descriptive sections of the chapters will be of real use to those with an interest in the varieties concerned, or in accent studies generally.

As regards the theoretical and methodological discussions, different chapters will doubtless appeal to different readers because of the differing traditions that they connect with as the authors are allowed to grind their own theoretical axes.

Several of the authors explore aspects of their data from a broadly Labovian sociolinguistic perspective. Thus McCafferty investigates his (London)Derry data in terms of what it shows about, or how it is affected by, class and ethnic identity. Mees & Collins show how females are leading a change in Cardiff English which involves the adoption of glottalling and glottalization of τ among ambitious working-class females in an attempt to sound as if they are speaking English English, and Mathisen finds that women are leading change in her Birmingham data as well, involving a move towards a clearly non-RP local variant. Also, Newbrook discusses self-perception of the use of an accent which arguably has low prestige.

Watt & Milroy's chapter is also sociolinguistic in nature. The chapter makes an important contribution to the study of 'dialect levelling' and argues against chain shift analyses of changes such as the one involving the FACE, GOAT, and NURSE vowels that they discuss in Newcastle English. They argue that this change involves a move not towards an institutionally imposed standard, such as RP, but towards a generalized identifiably Northern lect, brought about by loosening network ties. Williams & Kerswill also discuss the evidence for dialect levelling towards a hypothesized national 'non-standard' youth norm, which they show to be progressing at different rates in Milton Keynes, Reading, and Hull due to the different strengths of network ties among the speakers of the varieties, which is caused by differing rates of economic prosperity and in-migration. Stuart-Smith's chapter is an important contribution to the description of Voice Quality in Glasgow English and its sociolinguistic patterning. It is an impressive addition to the few existing pieces of such work.

The discussion in Stoddart, Upton & Widdowson's chapter is primarily dialectological, although it aims to connect with sociolinguists. The authors engage in a useful discussion addressing the question of how samples of 'local' speech can best be obtained by linguists, and defend the use of non-mobile older rural males (NORMs), or at least the basic principle behind the use of such informants, specifically in the collection of data for the *Survey of English Dialects*.

Two chapters focus on issues which are most closely identifiable as part of historical phonology. Hickey's discussion of a chain shift in his Dublin data is notable as he argues that it involves one single key change which is subject to both

neogrammarian exceptionlessness *and* lexical diffusion among different groups of speakers. Two groups of speakers which differ in terms of their social motivation are claimed to differ in the implementation of the change such that in one ‘motivated’ group (who want to be associated with the change), it proceeds in a neogrammarian fashion, and in another group of ‘detached participants’, the change is slowly working through the lexicon. Trudgill’s chapter on Norwich English also contains important contributions to debate in historical phonology, as he argues that, while some of the features of the accent can be accounted for by exogenous factors, such as contact with other communities, others must be the result of endogenous change, *contra* Milroy (1992).

Docherty & Foulkes’s chapter, which compares Derby with Newcastle English, combines some aspects of sociolinguistics with the tools of instrumental phonetics and seeks to draw some conclusions for phonological theory. They show convincingly that the use of spectrograms can reveal new and fascinating sociolinguistically structured patterns of consonantal realization which have gone unnoticed in standard sociolinguistic methodology, which uses only auditory analysis. They conclude that these results are difficult to reconcile with certain models of phonology and with models of phonological change which allow for phonologically driven or ‘system-based’ innovation, but these conclusions do not seem to me necessarily to follow. In line with the comments above, hinting at co-operation and compatibility among different academic disciplines in accent studies, it seems to me that both phonological *and* sociophonetic theory are needed in order to fully understand accent variation.

Scobbie, Hewlett & Turk also show how instrumental phonetics can interact with phonological theory by reinterpreting acoustic studies of varieties of Scottish English to show that certain previous descriptions of the Scottish Vowel Length Rule (SVLR) seem to have misrepresented the set of input vowels. They show how their important results imply that only the vowels /i, u, ai/ are involved in the length alternations involved in the SVLR environments, and that previous descriptions of the process, which have included at least /e, ə, o, au/, may be mistaken. As the authors conclude themselves, further research on the issue is needed, but it need not be that only instrumental research is considered. Native-speaker intuition data can be important in the description of phonological systems, as Trudgill shows in his chapter in this volume. One important upshot of their results is that they confirm that the complex phonological SVLR process exists, with its intriguing set of triggering phonological environments.

Tollfree also attempts to use the results of her study of accent variation in South London to engage with models of theoretical phonology, but the attempt is not convincing. Her description of the variety in question is detailed and impressive, but, perhaps due to lack of space, her discussion of Government Phonology in particular is garbled and does not succeed in showing that the model is incompatible with her data because her argumentation cannot be followed. In discussing L-velarization, she uses a segmental representation for /l/ which, oddly, features an underlying

labiality element, unlike any Government Phonologist, and claims that the process must be analysed as a case of lenition, which would not be the description of the process as she presents it. In the end she stipulates that the ‘clear/dark /l/ alternation is phonetic’ and does not recognize that a model of phonology can allow for gradient phonetic implementation.

UV concludes with a one-page appendix, references, and indices. The appendix ties in with a collection of recordings of twenty-four speakers which is available on cassette and CD to accompany *UV*. A short passage of unscripted speech is followed by the reading of a word list. While in principle it is clearly a good idea to make recordings available with such a book, the material included on the *UV* tape and CD is rather disappointing as it is not integrated with the main chapters of the book and not all of the recordings are of good quality.

The references and indices, by contrast, are very well done. F&D have done an excellent job in making them user-friendly. The references are gathered together at the end of the book but each title is annotated to indicate which chapters refer to it. This is a useful tool for backwards reference. The indices are also sizeable and useful.

As noted above, *UV* has its flaws. Any attempt to collate so much information *and* to spur on theoretical debate with contributions from a range of disparate authors could not avoid having some. The book’s positive points easily outweigh any shortcomings however, and a volume such as this is welcome and important. Work in ‘accent studies’ is continuing on several varieties of English (see, for example, Watson, 2002, Watt, 2002) and is also being carried out on accents of other languages (see, for example, Durand, 2002 for French and van Oostendorp, 2001 for Dutch). Only time will tell if the term ‘accent studies’ embeds itself into academic discourse to describe work of the sort contained in this book. Whether it does or not, it is to be hoped that *UV* serves as a stimulus for further work of this type.

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